

HORNCASTLE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Annual Report
of the
Medical Officer of Health
1949

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL

Medical Officer of Health

W.D. SWINNEY, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

Sanitary Inspector

W.C. MORGAN, M.I.St.E., F.I.S.F., M.R.San.I.

To the Chairman and Members,
Horncastle Urban District Council.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Council,

I have the honour to present to you the Statutory Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the year 1949.

The year started with the National Health Service beginning to emerge from its teething troubles, ready to face the toddler stage of its existence and it is satisfactory to be able to report that in the district this service has operated, on the whole, smoothly. The principle defect at present appears to be lack of hospital bed space and this is particularly true of accommodation for the aged, which is provided by the Regional Hospital Board for those who actually require medical attention and by Lindsey County Council, under the National Assistance Act, 1948, in cases of old persons who require care and attention purely because of advancing years but who are not suffering from any condition requiring medical supervision and nursing.

In the section devoted to statistics it will be noticed that the total number of inhabited houses is the same as last year - 1,178 - but that on page 16 it is stated that 9 new houses had been built. This is an error of last year's report, not of this and arose from the fact that the Council's Rating department, which supplied these figures, deals with a financial year, not with a calendar year, and included in the 1948 figure, houses which were not occupied till the first quarter of 1949.

It will be noted that, according to the Registrar General's Statistical estimate of population, Horncastle is growing and has topped the 4,000 mark. Births for the year, however, - 53, - showed a slight decrease on the 57 for 1948 and the Live Birth Rate per thousand population of 13.03 (14.79 in 1948) is but 78% of the corresponding figure of 16.7 for England and Wales. One is happy to observe that there were no still births, no neo-natal deaths, no infantile deaths, and no deaths of mothers arising from childbirth. While such unfortunate events may well happen from causes beyond medical skill, their complete absence reflects credit on the standards of ante-natal care, midwifery, and post-natal care which obtain in the district and this is further emphasised by the fact that no notifications of puerperal fever nor pyrexia were made during the year.

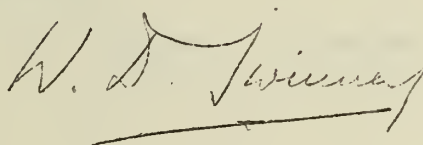
The 51 deaths which occurred in 1949 show a substantial increase over the 36 of the preceding year, but a glance at the Table of Age Group Distribution of deaths shows that 29 of these were of persons of 75 years or over, and that in fact there were only 7 deaths occurring in persons below the age of 60 years. The mean age at death of 70.94 years (65.16 in 1948) must, I think, be well above the average figure for the Country although that is not available for comparison.

The crude death rate per thousand estimated population is 12.53 but when that is adjusted by the application of a standardising factor, to correct for differences in sex and age group distribution of the population of Horncastle compared with the Country as a whole it is reduced to 10.27, the corresponding index for England and Wales being 11.7.

Notifications of infectious disease rose sharply, this being entirely due to a sharp outbreak of Measles in the early part of the year.

In concluding this introduction I should like to thank, for another year's friendly co-operation, all members of the Council, its officials and employees, and the Horncastle Water Company, whose work throughout the year has been most careful and reliable, greatly reducing the concern which used to be caused by the quality of the Town's Main Water Supply.

I am,
Your obedient Servant,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'W. D. Twining', with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

Medical Officer of Health.

Public Health Office,
Conging Street,
Horncastle.

STATISTICS

AREA OF URBAN DISTRICT: 1,421 acres

REGISTRAR GENERAL'S ESTIMATE OF RESIDENT POPULATION: 4,069

DENSITY OF POPULATION: 2.86 persons per acre

NUMBER OF INHABITED HOUSES: 1,178

SUM REPRESENTED BY PENNY RATE: £65. 12. 10.27d.

RATEABLE VALUE OF URBAN DISTRICT: £16,462

VITAL STATISTICS

(Corresponding figures for England and Wales are given in brackets)

<u>Live Births</u>						Males	Females	Total
Legitimate	..	..	..	..	..	26	25	51
Illegitimate	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	2
								<hr/> 53 <hr/>

Live Birth rate per thousand estimated population: 13.03 (16.7)

Still Births

						Males	Females	Total
Legitimate	-	-	-
Illegitimate	-	-	-

Still birth rate per thousand total (live and still)births: 00.00

Total birth rate (live and still) per thousand population: 13.03
(17.09)

Deaths

Males	Females	Total
23	28	51

Mean Age at Death: 70.94 years

Crude death rate per thousand estimated population: 12.53

Standardised death rate per thousand estimated population: 10.27

(Death rate, England & Wales, per thousand estimated population: 11.7)

AGE GROUP DISTRIBUTION OF DEATHS

Years	Deaths
Under 1	-
0 - 4	2
5 - 9	-
10-14	-
15-19	-
20-29	1
30-39	2
40-49	2
50-59	-
60-74	15
75 and over.	29
TOTAL 51	

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Maternal Mortality

No. of women dying as a result of childbirth.

(Headings No.29 and No.30 in the Registrar General's Short List)

	Deaths	Rates per 1,000 Total Births
No.29 Puerperal Sepsis	-	-
No.30 Other puerperal Causes	-	-
Maternal mortality rate per thousand total (live and still) births: 00.00		

Death Rate of Infants under One Year of Age

Total No. of deaths of infants under one year of age	.. Nil
All infants per thousand live births	00.00
Legitimate infants per thousand legitimate births	00.00
Illegitimate infants per thousand illegitimate births ..	00.00

Other Statistics

Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	3
" " Diarrhoea (under two years)	-
" " Heart Disease (all ages)	13
" " Measles (all ages)	-
" " Whooping Cough (all ages)	-

Causes of Death as shown in the Registrar General's Short List

Short List No.	Cause of Death	Males	Females	Total
1.	Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fevers	-	1	1
2.	Cerebro-Spinal Fever	-	1	1
3.	Scarlet Fever	-	1	1
4.	Whooping Cough	-	1	1
5.	Diphtheria	-	1	1
6.	Tuberculosis of the Respiratory system	2	1	3
7.	Other forms of Tuberculosis	-	1	1
8.	Syphilitic Diseases	-	1	1
9.	Influenza	-	1	1
10.	Measles	-	1	1
11.	Acute Poliomyelitis and Polioencephalitis	-	1	1
12.	Acute Infectious Encephalitis	-	1	1
13.	Cancer of the Buccal Cavity and Oesophagus (male), uterus (female)	-	1	1
14.	Cancer of stomach or duodenum	-	1	1
15.	Cancer of Breast	-	1	1
16.	Cancer of all other sites	-	2	2
17.	Diabetes	-	1	1
18.	Intra-Cranial Vascular Lesions	2	5	7
19.	Heart Diseases	6	7	13
20.	Other diseases of the Circulatory System	1	-	1
21.	Bronchitis	5	2	7
22.	Pneumonia	1	1	2
23.	Other Respiratory Diseases	-	1	1
24.	Ulcer of the stomach or duodenum	-	1	1
25.	Diarrhoea under two years	-	1	1
26.	Appendicitis	-	1	1
27.	Other digestive Diseases	1	1	2
28.	Nephritis	1	1	2
29.	Puerperal and Post-abortion Sepsis	-	1	1
30.	Other maternal causes	-	1	1
31.	Premature Birth	-	1	1
32.	Congenital malformation, Birth Injury, Infantile diseases	-	1	1
33.	Suicide	1	1	2
34.	Road Traffic accidents	-	1	1
35.	Other violent causes	-	1	1
36.	All other causes	3	6	9
TOTALS		23	28	51

Prevalence of and Control over Infectious Diseases.

The year was characterised by an epidemic of Measles of which disease 160 cases were notified, compared with only 8 cases in 1948. The epidemic - not unexpected in view of the low incidence of 1948 - was concentrated in the first quarter of the year, no notifications being received after 15th March. The intensity of this outbreak will be appreciated when it is realised that the attack rate works out at 39.27 notified cases per thousand population, compared with the figure of 8.95 for England and Wales. No deaths resulted from Measles, nor did any case develop complications necessitating admission to hospital.

Whooping Cough (17 notifications in 1948) was completely absent in 1949.

The 4 cases of Scarlet Fever (Nil in 1948) occurred singly, at different times throughout the year and had no connection with each other. In no case was it possible to demonstrate the source of infection. One case was treated in hospital because of domestic circumstances rather than medical need.

The year 1949 saw, throughout the Country, an increase in the incidence of poliomyelitis and polioencephalitis which, while not reaching the epidemic level of 1947, was greatly in excess of normal seasonal variation. The one case which was notified in Horncastle was mild, non-paralytic, and the patient - a five year old boy - made an uneventful and complete recovery.

The fact that this is the sixth successive year of freedom from Diphtheria is noted with pleasure, as is the absence of other more severe notifiable Diseases.

The following table summarises the notifications for the year.

Infectious Disease Notifications

Disease	Civilian Cases	Service Cases	Treated in Hospital	Deaths
Acute Polioencephalitis	1	-	1	-
Erysipelas	1	-	-	-
Measles	160	-	-	-
Pneumonia	2	-	-	-
Scarlet Fever	4	-	1	-
All others	-	-	-	-
TOTALS	168	-	2	-

Tuberculosis Statistics

The incidence of Tuberculosis continued to be low during the year, with a total of 3 fresh notifications (1 respiratory and 2 non-respiratory) compared with 4 (all non-respiratory) in 1948 and a total of 9 in 1947.

There were 2 deaths from Respiratory Tuberculosis, which gives a death rate per 1,000 population, from this condition, of 0.49, compared with the England and Wales figure of 0.45.

The following tables give distributions of notifications and deaths by sex and age groups, and the numbers and types of cases in the district Tuberculosis Register at the year's end.

Ages In Years	New Cases				Deaths			
	Respiratory		Non-respiratory		Respiratory		Non-respiratory	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0 - 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1 - 5	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
5 -10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10-15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15-25	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	-
25-35	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
35-45	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
45-55	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
55-65	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
65 and over	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	Nil	1	1	1	1	1	Nil	Nil

Cases on Tuberculosis Register at 31st December, 1949.

	Males	Females	Total
Respiratory	17	15	32
Non-respiratory	9	12	21
Totals	26	27	53

Diphtheria Immunisation

The County Health Department, responsible for the immunisation of Children against Diphtheria, has supplied the following figures:-

Children Immunised in Horncastle Urban District during 1949.

Under 5 years of age	61
5 - 14 years of age	1
Booster Doses	10

Vaccination against Smallpox.

Vaccination figures compare unfavourably with Diphtheria inoculation figures - a state of affairs by no means limited to Horncastle, but one which is to be deprecated.

Vaccinations in Horncastle Urban District during 1949.

Vaccinations

Under 1 yr. 1949	1-4yrs 1945-48	5-14yrs 1935-44	15yrs or over before 1935	Total
8	3	2	1	14
<u>Re-vaccinations</u>				
-	-	-	-	-

Health Services - General Provision.

General Practitioner Service
Maternity Service
Home Nursing Service
Ambulance Service
Laboratory Service

The above Services, as fully detailed in this Report for 1948, operated satisfactorily during the year.

Health Visiting Service

At the end of March Horncastle was unfortunate in losing the Services of the County Council's Health Visitor who previously lived and worked in the Town and no fresh appointment had been made by the end of the year. Emergency work was performed by the Woodhall Spa Health Visitor.

Home Help Service

This scheme, so well intentioned and potentially so valuable in the domestic crises which often accompany illness in the home unfortunately did not operate at all in Horncastle during the year, for the simple reason that there were no applicants from the District to undertake the work.

It is greatly to be hoped that this position will not continue.

Treatment Centres & Clinics

Clinic facilities at the County Council's Bridge Street Clinic were run as in previous years, with the exception that no ophthalmic clinics were held in 1949. Persons - mostly schoolchildren - who would have been examined at such clinics were instead seen by ophthalmic specialists under the provisions of the National Health Service Act - Supplementary Ophthalmic Service, and not under County Council arrangements.

Tuberculosis Clinic and Dispensary

In October, the Central Lincolnshire Chest Unit finally assumed responsibility for the Tuberculosis Clinic, continuing to hold it at the same hour as before and in the County Council's Clinic premises. From that time your Medical Officer ceased to have any clinical responsibility for cases of Tuberculosis in the District.

Hospitals.

There has been no change in Hospital Services available to residents in the Urban District, and these facilities remain as detailed in this Report for 1948.

National Assistance Act, 1948

Section 47 of the above Act conferred on Local Authorities the power to apply to a Court of Summary Jurisdiction for an order to remove to suitable premises, for the purposes of receiving the necessary care and attention, persons who -

- (a) are suffering from grave chronic disease or, being aged, infirm or physically incapacitated, are living in insanitary conditions, and
- (b) are unable to devote to themselves, and are not receiving from other persons, proper care and attention.

Such action is, of course, necessary only when the person concerned will not consent to voluntary admission to a suitable institution.

One case, which appeared to fall within the scope of the foregoing provisions was referred to the Medical Officer of Health by a general practitioner, but while the matter was being investigated and efforts made to contact relatives the patient, an elderly lady living by herself, died and further action was of course unnecessary.

Sanitary Circumstances of the District

New Housing

During the year the Council wisely decided that instead of searching year by year for sites to accommodate successive allocations of Council houses, it would be better in every way to plan the development of an estate on which to build not only one year's housing quota, but those of several years to come.

The acquisition of land, selection of house types, and preliminary planning of the lay-out were in hand well before the year's end but it is regretted that no houses had actually appeared.

This estate, when fully developed, will not only ease the housing situation in the town but will greatly enhance its amenities.

The last four houses of the Mareham Road Housing Scheme ("The Crescent") were completed and occupied during the year, and all of the few licences permitted by the Ministry of Health for private, as opposed to Council, house building were taken up.

Water Supplies

A careful bacteriological check was kept during the year on the water supplied by Horncastle Water Company with the undernoted results.

Samples taken in Horncastle Urban District	..	..	44
Samples taken from first draw-off, Cawkwell	..	..	46
Total Samples taken	..	..	90

Bacteriological Reports

Class I, Highly Satisfactory		85
Class II, Satisfactory	(12/2/49)	1
Class III, Suspicious	(28/12/49)	1
Class IV, Unsatisfactory	(8/6/49)	1

Samples received too late at the Laboratory to be Reported on	2
	90

Investigation into the circumstances of the Class III and IV samples failed to show any reason why the quality of water had dropped to that extent. There was no known break-down in the system of Chlorination nor had there been any known infiltration of surface water, conditions which had in the past led to bad bacteriological findings, nor was it believed that there had been any accidental contamination of samples in the taking.

These blemishes on an otherwise excellent annual record remain unexplained but perhaps illustrate the ease with which unsatisfactory water may occur in an undertaking in which the purity of the water supplied depends on the perfect operation of only one method of purification.

Four samples of water from wells supplying the County Council smallholdings in Boston Road were found on examination to be unsatisfactory and the matter was referred to the County Council as landlords of the properties concerned, for appropriate action, which had not been taken by the end of the year.

Sewage Disposal

The Council has under consideration the construction of new sewage disposal plant. The existing machinery is heavily overburdened and even when operating at its optimum provides only for partial treatment.

This matter still calls for urgent attention.

Public Cleansing: Refuse Collection & Disposal.

These services operated satisfactorily throughout the year and except for accidental break-downs of the Refuse Collecting Truck a regular once weekly service was maintained.

Swimming Pool

During the season the bacteriological examination of five samples of water from the Council's Swimming Pool gave satisfactory results.

Estimations of residual chlorine were frequently carried out.

Schools

There has been no substantial improvement in School accommodation in the District and although the provision of a new Junior School is now something which can be foreseen in the immediate, instead of the indefinite, future the present facilities for junior education, in particular, continue to be of the lowest standard.

A few days before the beginning of the Christmas Holidays a case of Poliomyelitis occurred in the Junior School, the patient being resident in the neighbouring Rural District, and although not in accordance with modern policy regarding school closure, the school was closed at once, until the beginning of the Spring Term, a step justified by the following reasons:-

- 1). So near the end of the term closing of the school would not disrupt, to any serious extent, the educational curriculum.
- 2) Modern policy, which is against school closing in such a case, presupposes that standards of school hygiene have kept pace with the times, but this is not true of Horncastle Junior School.

Sanitary Conveniences

The public lavatories in St. Lawrence Street, adequate for the resident population, but hitherto unable to meet the demands of the many passengers from long distance buses making a short halt in the Market Place, were reconstructed and considerably extended for this specific requirement.

Sanitary Work in the District

The immediately succeeding pages summarise the work of inspection during the year. They do not, of course, indicate to what extent - and it is a considerable one - your Sanitary Inspector's time is occupied by his duties as Surveyor.

I	<u>Total No. of new houses erected during the year</u>	9
(1)	By the Local Authority	4
(2)	By other Local Authorities	Nil
(3)	By other bodies or persons	5

II	<u>Inspection of Dwelling Houses during the year</u>	
(1)	a. Total no. of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects under Public Health or Housing Acts.	556
	b. No. of inspections made for the purpose	643
(2)	a. No. of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	Nil
	b. No. of dwelling houses found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	130
III	<u>Remedy of Defects during the year without service of Formal Notices</u>	
	No. of defective dwellings rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers	Nil
IV	<u>Action under Statutory Powers during the year</u>	
(1)	Proceedings under any appropriate section of the Housing Act, 1936	Nil
(2)	Proceedings under Public Health Acts	
	a. No. of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	4
	b. No. of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied, by owners, after service of formal notices	4
V	<u>Housing Act, 1936 - Part IV - overcrowding</u>	
(1)	Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year	Nil
(2)	Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	Nil
VI	<u>Movable Dwellings, Tents, Vans, Etc.</u>	
(1)	No. of Site Licences	5
(2)	No. of individual Licences	5
(3)	No. inspected during year	12
(4)	No. of contraventions found and remedied	Nil

VII Bakehouses

(1)	No. in District	11
(2)	No. of underground bakehouses	1
(3)	No. of inspections	21
(4)	No. of contraventions	Nil

VIII Dairies and Milk Shops

(1)	No. on Register	3
(2)	No. of Pasteurising Licences	Nil
(3)	No. of Inspections	6
(4)	Contraventions	Nil

IX Ice Cream

(1)	No. of Manufacturers	4
(2)	No. of premises Registered for Sale (including Manufacturers)	10
(3)	No. of Contraventions	Nil
(4)	No. of Samples taken	16
(5)	Category of Samples (Methylene Blue Test)	
	Grade I	5
	Grade II	6
	Grade III	3
	Grade IV	2

X Slaughterhouses

(1)	No. on Register	2
(2)	No. of inspections	64
(3)	Contraventions of bye-laws	2
(4)	Defects remedied	2

XI Offensive Trades

(1)	No. of premises in District	1
(2)	No. of inspections	30
(3)	Contraventions of bye-laws	Nil
(4)	Contraventions remedied	Nil

XII Shops Act, 1934

No routine inspection of shops was possible during the year because of pressure of other work.

XIII Water Supply

(1) Public Supply

- a. Area supplied - whole area except parts of Boston Road, Scrivelsby Hill and Langton Rd. 71
- b. Percentage of houses supplied 90
- c. Number of samples obtained for analysis
- d. Any insufficiency and where - no actual insufficiency, but there is only the smallest margin in times of drought

(2) Wells

- a. New Sunk Nil
- b. Closed as polluted .Nil
- c. No. of samples obtained for analysis 4

XIV Drainage and Sewerage

(1) Closets

- a. No. of houses with privy vaults in District Nil
- b. No. of houses with pail closets in District 60
- c. No. of water closets substituted for dry receptacles 6
- d. No. of houses with water closets in District 971
- e. No. of Water closets repaired 12

(2) Drains

- a. Drains examined, tested, exposed etc. 23
- b. Drains unstopped, repaired, trapped etc. 15
- c. Waste pipes, rain-water pipes disconnected repaired etc. Nil
- d. New soil pipes or ventilating shafts fixed Nil

(3) Sewers - new lengths laid Nil

(4) Tanks, Filter Beds, etc. - see under "Sanitary Circumstances of the District - Sewers and Sewage Disposal". Recommendation has been made to the Council for the reconstruction of the Sewage Disposal Works.

(5) Cesspools

a. Cesspools emptied, cleansed, etc.	Nil
b. Cesspools abolished	6

XV Disinfection, Etc.

(1) Rooms disinfected	6
a. After ordinary infectious disease	4
b. After Tuberculosis	2
(2) No. of premises disinfected	8

XVI House Refuse

(1) No. of houses using dustbins	1,120
(2) Method of removal of house refuse - Public Scavenger: Karrier Bantam Covered Motor Truck	
(3) Frequency of Removal	- weekly
(4) No. of complaints of non-removal	Nil
(5) Method of final disposal -	controlled tip
(6) Are existing arrangements satisfactory -	Yes

XVII Total No. of nuisances abated during year

(1) Abated as a result of informal action by Sanitary Inspector	9
(2) Reported to Council for Statutory action	Nil
(3) Nature of nuisances:-	
a. Accumulation of Refuse	3
b. Foul pigs and other animals	6

Food Hygiene, Etc.

The adoption by the Council of Model Byelaws for the safeguarding of cleanliness in the handling of food and the institution of higher standards of hygiene, not only in shops and food-dealers' premises, but in Hotels, Restaurants and Cafes, can receive only the warmest approval, and such action will certainly strengthen the hands of the Council's Sanitary Officers in this direction.

Although no cases of food poisoning were notified during the year, that does not mean to say that none occurred, of a nature so transient as not to require Medical attention, and where the mild case occurs there is, as recent work has shown, every possibility of more serious consequences.

It is surprising to find that the Ministry of Food, which instituted the Model Bye-laws referred to above and invited Local Authorities to adopt them, shows an altogether remarkable and illogical lack of concern in matters of food hygiene which come directly under its control. Despite continued pressure by the Council the Ministry's Central Abattoir in Horncastle continues to be thoroughly unsatisfactory. No longer can immediate post-war difficulties be considered valid excuses for failure to institute improvements and one can only wonder when excuses will be superseded by promises and promises followed by effective action.

No foodstuffs were condemned or seized in Horncastle during the year, except meat condemned during routine inspection at the Slaughterhouse, as summarised in the following table.

	Cattle including Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number Killed	804	283	3254	267
Number Inspected	775	266	3150	260
<u>All Diseases except Tuberculosis</u>				
Whole Carcases condemned	20	1	1	4
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	104	-	53	60
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis	15	-	20	24
<u>Tuberculosis Only</u>				
Whole Carcases condemned	23	2	1	5
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	64	3	8	5
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis	10	20	0.25	4

FACTORIES ACTS, 1937 & 1948

Part I of the Act

(1)	Number of Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	13
(2)	Number of inspections of above premises	22
(3)	Number of Factories in which Section 7 is to be enforced by Local Authorities	40
(4)	Number of inspections of above premises	38

H.M. Inspector of Factories referred two cases in which sanitary conveniences were either defective or unsuitable.

